

S M -36
Robert H. Collins Birtplace
Clements Vicinity
Private

2nd quarter of 19th
century

The log rubble of this bulldozed site indicates that the house was a one room dwelling with thin hewn log walls sheathed with weatherboards. It may have been the residence of slaves or of free Negroes. It stands in sharp contrast to the large two story house that Robert H. Collins was to build later and shows that for him the American dream of upward mobility -- as symbolized by the transition from log house to big house -- had personal reality.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

SM - 315
MAGI #1903156427

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Robert Henry Collins Birth Place

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATIONSTREET & NUMBER (Colton Point Road)
North side of Route 242, 1 mile west of junction of Routes
242 and 234.

CITY, TOWN

Clements

☒ VICINITY OF Dynard

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

St. Mary's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☒ OTHER: Ruins**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

William H. and Richard Pilkerton

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Clements, Maryland 20624

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. St. Mary's County Courthouse

Liber #: 146

Map 31

Folio #: 304

P. 52

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Leonardtown

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1975</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

All that remains of this log house is a pile of logs, lumber, and brick rubble, because the house was bulldozed from its location about twenty-five yards to the east and pushed to this place where it rests on the shoulder of a hill.

According to Dickerson Collins, the informant who led me to this site, this was the dwelling in which his father, Robert H. Collins, was born and raised by his parents. Since Dickerson had never ventured from the road to examine this house, which was set back in the fields, he could not provide a description of the interior plan nor of its construction. However, based on an investigation of the rubble, one can ascertain that the dwelling was a 1 or 1 1/2 story log house. The logs were hewn, measured about 3" x 9", half dovetailed at the corners, and sheathed with wide unpainted weatherboards with feathered edges. The 3" thickness of the logs suggests that the weatherboards were original, since most houses with the logs exposed tend to use thicker logs for insulation. In the corner joints, there were no indications of auger holes for pegs or for upright posts, devices often used for bracing purposes in log houses in the county. Nor was there evidence of nails for reinforcing the corners. There may have been pegs from the plate into the log member directly below, but this is unknown because the thick overgrowth prevented a thorough search of the rubble for all the logs.

The sills were rather massive in comparison to the members above, measuring circa 7" x 7" and were of cedar, as were the hewn puncheon sleepers. The presence of cedar for such purposes has not been found to my knowledge in log houses in southern Maryland, though the resistance of cedar to rot and insect infestation makes its use in the foundation practical and logical. The joists were dressed on all four sides, had not been ceiled, and like the puncheon sleepers, contained nails for floor boards that were machine cut of the post-1830 type.

The small amount of timbers in the rubble suggests that the house was similar in size to the Field Hands' Quarter at Sotterley Plantation nearby (S'M - 7A) or to the slave house at River View (S M - 120A). It probably consisted of one open room downstairs and another upstairs. Perhaps there was a separate "summer" kitchen. In the rubble that was examined, there was no sign of boards for interior siding or for partitions. The roof was covered with wood shingles.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
				Social History	
				Black History	

SPECIFIC DATES 2nd quarter of 19th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Dickerson Collins, the son of Robert Henry Collins, his father was born and raised in this log house. His father had pointed out the house to Dickerson during his youth and said that it was his birth place. However, Dickerson himself never ventured from the road to examine the house, so while he could identify the site for survey purposes, he could not tell more about the construction nor plan. The 1880 census shows Robert Collins, born 1840, and his wife, Margaret, born 1842, living in Milestown in that year, with their son, Robert H., born 1865, and four younger siblings. Edwin Beitzell, the careful historian of St. Mary's County, identifies this young Collins as the future owner of the house surveyed in Abell, SM-278. Collins, Sr., was employed as a "farm laborer" and was not a landowning farmer in 1880. His grandson Dickerson agreed that he was a tenant farmer, and added that he and his wife moved into his son's new house in their old age.

According to Dickerson, his grandfather had been a free Negro before the Civil War, but the name does not appear on the 1850 or 1860 list of free Negroes in the U.S. Censuses. Since it is not unusual for the names of Negroes to be omitted for the censuses in the antebellum and postbellum eras, the family tradition could well be accurate, and this log house could have been the dwelling of a free black family. Its thinly hewn logs intended to be sheathed originally with weatherboards indicates that this house was nicer in appearance than the more roughly finished log slave houses of Negroes in the county, such as the Field Hands' Quarters at nearby Sotterley Plantation.

This plain log house constitutes a striking contrast to the stylistic two-story frame house built in 1898 by carpenters that were hired by Robert H. Collins, the man raised in this house. The comparison shows that the American dream of upward mobility -- as symbolized by the log cabin to big house transition -- had personal reality for Robert H. Collins.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George W. McDaniel

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

20 Dean Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis, Maryland

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



ROBERT Henry Collins BIRTH PLACE
 STMA 315
 CLEMENTS, Md.
 Log rubble
 GWM — 6/77



ROBERT Henry Collins Birthplace
STMA 315

Dickerson Collins (pictured)

CLEMENTS, Md.

GWM — 6/77

(John Dickerson Collins, son of R.H.C.,
by log rubble of his father's house)